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Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01

PA-04 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 OMB-01 DRC-01

/074 W
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R 220612Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 152
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2360

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT KS
SUBJECT: KOREAN EMBASSY CONCERNS WITH AMERICAN PRESS CONVERAGE

SUMMARY: IN TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH KOREAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS PAO WAS ADVISED OF SERIOUS CONCERN WITH STORIES RECENTLY FILED BY TOKYO-BASED AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS. KORAN OFFICIALS INDICATED THEY WERE UNDER "HEAVY PRESSURE" FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT AND SOLICITED ADVICE ON HOW TO OBTAIN MORE BALANCED COVERAGE. EMBASSY COMMENTS ON POSSIBLE PURPOSES OF MEETING. END SUMMARY.

1. ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, PAO HAD LUNCH AT THEIR REQUEST, WITH MINISTER HA JONG YOON, POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AND TAE RO YOON, CULTURAL AND INFORMATION ATTACHE, IF SO. KOREAN EMBASSY. MAIN THRUST OF DISCUSSION WAS REPEATED QUESTION AS TO HOW TO INSURE MORE BALANCED REPORTING ON INTERNAL SITUATION IN SO. KORIA BY AMERICAN PRESS CORPS. RECENT STORIES BY BERNIE KRISHER, NEWSWEEK, AND DON OBERDORFER, WASHINGTON POST, CITED AS EXAMPLES WHICH "GREATLY IRRITATED" ROK. KORAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS SAID THEY WERE UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT BUT NEVER SPECIFIED PRECISELY WHAT THEY WERE BEING PRESSED TO DO. SEVERAL TIMES REITERATED FOLLOWING SYLLOGISM: (A)
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ACTIONS SUCH AS RECENT EMERGENCY MEASURES NOT PECULIAR SO.

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KOREA BUT ARE STEPS REQUIRED AT SOME TIME OR ANOTHER BY
ALMOST ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: (B) ADVERSE REPORTING OR
OPPOSITION TO SUCH MEASURE CREATES GREATER INTERNAL
PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT INVOLVED: (C) THEREFORE, ANY
GOVERNMENT WHICH FACES TEST OF SURVIVAL MUST JUDGE EFFECT
OF SUCH REPORTING ON INTERNAL SITUATION AGAINST EFFECT
OF BANNING EITHER CERTAIN CORRESPONDENTS AND/OR PUBLICATIONS.

2. PAO STATED THAT, GIVEN CENSORSHIP, INTERNAL READERSHIP
OF ADVDRSE ARTICLES IN FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS CANNOT BE
BREAT BUT POLMIN YOON SIAD IT WAS SUFFICIENT TO BE
SORRISOME. PAO ALSO NOTED THAT BANNING OF EITHER CORRE-
SPONDENTS OR PUBLICATIONS WOULD ADVERSELY EFFECT PUBLIC
OPINION IN U.S. BOTH ACKNOWLEDGED THIS BUT SAID CHOICE
MIGHT BE BETWEEN SUCH REPERCUSSIONS OR SURVIVAL OF THE
GOVERNMENT.

3. KOREANS ALSO NOTED CONTINUING, ALTHOUGH ONLY OCCASIONAL,
REFERENCE TO KIM DAO JUNG CASE IN FOREIGN PRESS AND PAO
SAID THIS OBVIOUSLY HAD SOME NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON
ATTITUDES OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.

4. MEETING NECESSARILY ENDED ON VERY INCONCLUSIVE NOTE.

5. MINISTER YOON SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED FEBURARY 21 ASKING
PAO IF HE WOULD "QUIETLY ADVISE AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS
OF RK'S CONERN." PAO STATED HE WOULD HAVE NO PROPLEM
DOING THIS IF AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION SHOULD ARISE BUT THAT
HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR HE WAS SIMPLY PASSING THIS CONCERN
ALONG, BUT AVODIING ANY INDICATION US EMBASSY WAS IN ANY WAY
ATTEMPTING INFLUENCE REPORTERS.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: ALTHOUGH DISCUSSIONS WERE MOST
LIKELY MEANT TO GET AMERICAN EMBASSY SMOEHOW INFLUENCE
THE CORRESPONDENTS, THERE IS OF COURSE SOME POSSIBILITY
THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE MEANT TO TELEGRAPH POSSIBLE FUTURE
ACTIONS BY ROK AGAINST INDIVIDUAL CORRESPONENTS OR
PUBLICATIONS. SHOESMITH

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Type: TE
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